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# THE ARTIST

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## The American Survey

Edited by Charles H. Caffin

MR. JOHN B. CAULDWELL, as most readers of THE ARTIST know, is Director of the American Fine Arts Department at the forthcoming Paris Exposition. A few years ago political considerations would have determined the appointment. It marks, therefore, a distinct step forward that the selection of Mr. Cauldwell was in response to the unanimous desire of a considerable number of art societies. Many facts combined to make him a most desirable man for the post. In the first place, he is a layman in full sympathy with American art and artists and yet unidentified with any particular set of men or theories. He can, therefore, speak and act independently and with no suspicion of having personal prejudices, both in his dealings with the artists and when he has to stand between them and the Government. He is a gentleman of means and with no ambitions in the direction of public life. He has nothing to gain, nothing to lose. Those who know him best are sure that his one intention in this matter is to make a good showing of American art. At the back of this intention are a sane judgment and a strong will and considerable executive ability.

There will be plenty of opportunity for the display of these qualities. On the one hand are the politicians, who have to be handled with infinite tact; and on the other, to their shame be it said, a noisy minimum of disaffected painters. The latter have already begun to raise the cry of "not fair," and rush into print for the purpose of creating a prejudice against Mr. Cauldwell. It is a pitiful and contemptible proceeding.

While it is true that his election was not participated in by all the art societies of the country, it is unquestionable that the principal art societies were represented, and that, though their headquarters are in New York, their membership includes painters and sculptors from all the art centres, whose works

receive equal recognition at all the exhibitions. These societies, certainly, elected him, for if they had not moved in the matter nothing would have been done and the appointment would have been made politically. None the less he practically represents the entire body of artists, and has pledged himself to do so actually.

This does not, however, imply that each art centre should be treated as a separate unit. The object of this exhibition is to make such a complete and creditable display of American art that the foreigner's question, whether there be any American artists apart from those who live abroad, may be answered once and for all. For this purpose it matters nothing whether a picture comes from Oshkosh or Speonk, provided that it be good. It is not localities or coteries that must be represented, but the art of the country. In the same way, cruel as it may sound, it is not the individual artist who in the first place has to be considered. The space is limited, only a comparatively small number of pictures can be hung, and it is not the man, but his art, that must be taken into account. Disappointments are, therefore, inevitable; but, provided that a good exhibition is secured, the gain will not be confined to those only whose pictures are included. A large proportion of our people import their ideas upon art from abroad. If Europe shall make the amazing discovery that art is produced in America, the announcement will filter over here in the shape of a new gospel. We shall actually begin to believe in our own artists.



IN another column appears a letter from Mr. WALTER GILMAN PAGE, drawing attention to an error of fact in our correspondent's account of the hearing given to a delegation of Boston artists and laymen by the

Committee on State-house. The object of the delegation was to urge that a competition should be inaugurated for the purpose of assigning the commissions for the proposed mural decorations in Memorial Hall. Mr. Page, while not impugning the accuracy of the account as a whole, takes exception to a paragraph contained in it, which was quoted from the *Boston Evening Transcript*. This made it appear as if no direct result had followed the action of the delegation, whereas, he points out, the committee requested the artists to draw a bill, so that they are immediately and solely responsible for the details of the measure which was subsequently presented to the Legislature. We thank Mr. Page for making the point clear, though we cannot agree with him that the error of fact robs the further remarks of our correspondent upon the subject of competitions for mural decoration of significance and title to serious consideration. Whether the bill was drawn by artists or by laymen does not affect the details of the bill. These are still fair subject for criticism, and we stand by our correspondent's comments.

An open competition is not the way to secure the best results. Whatever may be said to the contrary, it remains a fact that the men who "have arrived" cannot afford to spend time upon sketches in an unlimited competition. They know that a sketch affords very little criterion of the probable value of the completed work unless there is attached to it the assurance derived from a knowledge of the painter's personality and artistic equipment. But in this case the jury will have no clue as to the author and will have to decide upon the merits of the sketch alone. At least, that is the theory. But there is a dangerous clause introduced into this bill, providing that "the designs submitted shall be placed on exhibition by the jury for not less than two weeks," and that "the decision of the jury shall be announced at least four days before the close of the said exhibition." We publish elsewhere a code governing competitions which has been agreed upon by many of the leading architectural bodies in the country. One of the clauses reads: "The drawings, models, etc., are not to be placed on exhibition before the verdict of the jury is rendered." How wise a provision this is any one con-

versant with the abundance of scandal that has attended so many competitions will admit. Opening the doors to the public lets in a flood of comment, if nothing worse, which increases the difficulty of a courageous and impartial verdict on the part of the jury.

If a competition is determined upon, prudence would recommend that it should be a "limited" one, to which some six painters are invited to contribute, with provision made for payment of the work involved in preparing sketches. Some of them might well be men who have not yet executed any mural decoration, but whose work suggests that they would prove good decorators if the opportunity were given them. In this case the jury would have a reasonable assurance that all the competitors were capable of executing the work, and could unhesitatingly accept the sketches which on the face of them were most meritorious. At the risk of repetition, we again express the hope that one painter instead of several may be selected to decorate Memorial Hall. Such a scheme demands uniformity of feeling and method. A contemporary, criticising our contention, refers to the fact that four painters were employed on the four lunettes in the entrance hall of the Walker Art Gallery, at Bowdoin College. We are grateful for the reminder, as it completely proves our case. The discord of these four paintings is painfully apparent. There is no harmony of effect, and the shock is increased by the inequality of the technical proficiency displayed. The same thing, it seems inevitable, will be repeated in the Appellate Court Building in New York.

The intention in all these cases appears to be that art will be encouraged by giving out the work piecemeal to many artists. Following the same line of reasoning, the design of the building itself should be divided between a number of architects. The surest way to encourage art is to give the artist the greatest opportunity of doing himself justice and to secure to the public the object lesson of a harmonious and sustained scheme. The action, however well intentioned, which results in neither, is only retarding the growth of native art. It is converting buildings which might be monumental into mere museums of curiosities.

## THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF AMERICA

PLENTY of enthusiasm accompanied the formation of the new association, The Architectural League of America, of which an account appears elsewhere. Indeed, the committee intrusted with the duty of drawing up suggestions for its objects and organization fairly reveled in high-sounding and far-reaching projects for its scope of action and influence. The practical objects for which the convention was sitting are either omitted or only dimly discernible through the mass of verbiage. These were to secure concerted action in the matter of exhibitions, so that dates should not clash and exhibits might proceed in a regular circuit from one city to another. Due provision, however, had been made to this end in the previous transactions of the convention, so that something of very practical utility has already been accomplished. The significance of the new organization in its wider intentions seems to be that it represents the younger men in the profession, and is to a certain extent a protest against the conservatism of the American Institute of Architects. The tendency for some time has been towards increase of vitality in the various architectural clubs rather than in the chapters of the Institute. These clubs have further reinforced themselves by recognizing the interdependence of the architect, sculptor and painter, and by encouraging the alliance of the fine arts. Add to this that the active work of these clubs has largely passed into the hands of the younger men, and the inevitableness of some sort of federation of national scope is apparent. It needed only such an opportunity as the convention at Cleveland, Ohio, to make it spring into existence. The fact that the League has been formed is of more importance than the actual terms of its formation. The latter were necessarily affected by the enthusiasm and unexpectedness of the occasion. If, as we feel convinced, there is a genuine force behind the movement, it may confidently be expected to come down from the clouds and settle itself along solid ground.



## THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF AMERICA.

THE recently organized Architectural League of America, in its inception, at

any rate, is not so much a new society as an organization for drawing existing societies into closer union. Hitherto the exhibition committees of each society have worked independently, with the result that architects are beset with applications for contributions and the committees have a large amount of clerical duty to perform, while the latter has been inadequately fruitful in securing exhibits owing to the clashing of the dates of exhibitions. Mr. Henry W. Tomlinson, of Chicago, has been working to bring about some practical solution of this problem, and with this end in view a convention of architects was held at Cleveland, Ohio, on June 2 and 3. There were ninety-seven in attendance, among whom were official delegates from the following thirteen clubs: The Architectural League of New York; The Society of Beaux Arts Architects; the architectural clubs of Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Detroit and Toronto (Canada), and the Illinois, Pittsburgh and Cleveland Chapters of the American Institute of Architects.

A committee was appointed to arrange a schedule, so that the exhibitions might be consecutive, thus forming a circuit, through which a drawing once entered could pass on to each subsequent exhibition. Provision was also made for a national exhibition committee to undertake a comprehensive and once-for-all solicitation of contributions, and for one of its members to be a resident foreign member, who shall secure a selection of drawings from England and France. On the other hand, the hanging committee of each exhibition is to retain its independence and the individual exhibitor to be allowed to designate at which cities he wishes his contributions to appear. Further to simplify the details of business, it was arranged that each hanging committee shall contain one member from the previous exhibition on the circuit. Mr. Julius F. Harder, a member of the Architectural League of New York, also urged the adoption by all the societies represented of the Code Governing Competitions in Design, and was appointed chairman of a committee to forward the same.

The reception given to these practical suggestions was so hearty that the delegates went farther than they had anticipated, and organized an architectural league or federation of